

Minutes

October 23, 2019

SC Military Base Task Force

A meeting of the South Carolina Military Base Task Force convened on October 23, 2019, at 12:00 PM at McEntire Joint National Guard Base at the 169th Fighter Wing Headquarters, 1325 South Carolina Road, Columbia.

A notice of the meeting was posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

The following Executive Committee members were in attendance: William L. Bethea, Jr. (Chairman), Charlie Farrell (Executive Coordinator), Dan Beatty (Vice Chairman), MG Van McCarty (TAG), George Ramsey (Charleston), Mary Graham (Charleston), and Jim Wegmann (Beaufort). Others Task Force members attending were Ted Pitts (President and CEO of SC Chamber of Commerce), Carl Blackstone (President and CEO of Columbia Chamber of Commerce), Chris Hardy (President and CEO of the Greater Sumter Chamber of Commerce), Bill Tuten (Designee for Charleston County Council), Lt. Col. (Ret) Marlon James (Designee for City of Columbia), Fred Monk (Designee for Department of Commerce), Haidee Stith (Director of Communications), and Sandy Claypoole (Program Manager).

Bill Bethea called the meeting to order and MG Van McCarty gave the opening remarks. Col Akshai Gandhi, Commander 169th Fighter Wing, presented an operations overview of the SCANG.

REPORTS FROM COMMUNITIES

Jim Wegmann, Beaufort

MCAS: VMAT 501 continues to train for the F-35B. A second training squadron, VMAT 502, will stand up in January 2020. A third hangar is under construction. Main runway will be out 14 months for resurfacing/improvements starting in November. MCRD has upgraded 2 rifle ranges and the 3rd of 4 will start in 2020. The hospital is hearing rumors that it may close and a super clinic will be established at Parris Island.

George Ramsey, Charleston

A group from the Charleston Chamber of Commerce and several local leaders recently paid a visit to the Pentagon to meet with General Goldfein and other Flag officers. They also met with Representative Joe Wilson, Representative Joe Cunningham, and Rear Admiral Michael Ryan at U.S. Coast Guard headquarters. Community Partnerships are a big issue for the military. A meeting at Joint Base Charleston identified charters with municipalities and school districts for recycling and repairs to roads. The next meeting will be in January.

Dan Beatty, Fort Jackson

Fort Jackson has hosted visits from TRADOC and CASAs. USC's new President is retired LTG Caslen. The Army is reorganizing training with additional manpower at LT and NCO at Platoon level. The Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command will move here from Ft. Bragg. Ft. Gordon has 31,000 employed with training and the Cyber Center. There is a huge capacity and interest to leverage with SC because many of these personnel are moving to SC because of our schools.

Charlie Farrell, Sumter

Shaw will soon deploy a fighter squadron of 400 to the AOR for about 6 months. AFCENT personnel are moving back to the warfare center from the AOR. Should lead to more folks coming next year. Construction should start on new facilities for Remotely Piloted Aircrafts (RPAs) early 2020.

MG Van McCarty, National Guard

SCNG is still in the hunt for the F-35. Kevin Shwedo is doing a great job. The Minuteman scholarships are helping with recruitment. Guard personnel have deployed to CENTCOM, and MILCOM at Joint Base Charleston. Greenwood, Lancaster, Florence, and Sumter armories are being upgraded.

Charlie Farrell paid tribute to Air Force Col (Ret) Jack Van Loan, who was a POW in Vietnam for six years and died October 14, 2019.

Bill Bethea gave the 2020 Legislative Update. This legislative session the Task Force will focus on these five priorities:

1. Spouse Credentialing - S.455 and H.3263 in Conference Committee.
Also, expedited Credentialing for School Teachers - S.322.
2. Workforce Enhancement and Military Recognition Act - H.3135 and S.179.
3. Drone Restriction near Military Bases - S.180 and H.3776.
4. Wind Energy Regulation and Siting Act - S.660.
5. Authority for Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) in South Carolina (as is the case with other Federal Law Enforcement Agencies) to enforce State Laws in support of State Law Enforcement – S.413.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 PM for a flight line tour.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy Claypoole